

In the Specification

Please amend the specified paragraphs as follows (the changes on these paragraphs are shown with ~~strike through~~ for deleted matter and underlining for added matter):

On page 1, lines 7-12, please amend in the following manner:

The present invention relates to a thermoplastic elastomer composition excellent in moldability, heat resistance, weather resistance, chemical resistance, adhesivity, flexibility and abrasion resistance. Further, the present invention relates to a composition for powder ~~slash~~slush molding and a powder ~~slash~~slush molded article using the composition.

On pages 2-3, lines 4-27 and lines 1-11, please amend in the following manner:

As physical properties necessary for these superficial skin materials, there are resistance to chemicals which may be possibly contacted, further, the adhesivity of superficial skin with a substrate when the superficial skin and the substrate are directly adhered, the adhesivity of the superficial skin with a buffer material when the buffer material is provided between the superficial skin and the substrate, in addition to mechanical properties, scratch resistance, heat resistance, strain restorability. As the molding method of the superficial skin materials, the powder ~~slash~~slush molding using soft powder material which is a powder molding method is widely adopted for the superficial skin of interior equipments for an automobile such as an instrument panel, a console box and a door trim. This is caused by that they have soft texture, skin crepe and stitch can be provided, further, the degree of freedom in design is large, and

designing property is satisfactory. Since a forming pressure is not applied in the molding method, differing from other molding methods such as injection molding and compression molding, it is a condition that powder flowability is excellent because the powder material is required to be uniformly adhered on a mold with a complicated shape at molding and simultaneously, it is also a condition that melt viscosity is low because powder adhering on a mold is melted and a film is required to be formed by flowing under no pressure. As the material, a polyvinyl chloride sheet has been conventionally widely used because it is excellent in hardness of a surface in use and flexibility, but since a polyvinyl chloride resin contains a lot of chlorine in its molecules, there is fear of great adverse effect on environments and an effective substitute material is desired (Patent Reference 2). Accordingly, a sheet molded article of a thermoplastic elastomer has been conventionally developed as the substitution of the polyvinyl chloride resin (Patent Reference 3, Patent Reference 4, and Patent Reference 5). However, sheets using a polyolefin resin and a styrene elastomer are insufficient in abrasion resistance, flexibility and oil resistance. Further, a sheet using thermoplastic polyurethane was poor in moldability, and also has a problem from the viewpoint of the cost thereof.

On page 6, lines 9-11, please amend in the following manner:

Also, the present invention relates to the thermoplastic elastomer composition for powder ~~slush~~slush molding, containing the above-mentioned composition.

On page 6, lines 19-25, please amend in the following manner:

An acrylic block copolymer composition excellent in moldability and heat resistance in addition to maintain weather resistance, chemical resistance, adhesivity, flexibility and abrasion resistance, which are the characteristics of an acrylic block copolymer, can be obtained by using the present invention. Further, the composition of the present invention can be preferably used for powder ~~slash~~slush molding.

On pages 8-9, lines 23-27 and 1-6, please amend in the following manner:

The number average molecular weight of the acrylic block copolymer (A) is not particularly limited, and may be determined from molecular weight respectively necessary for the methacrylic polymer block (a) and the acrylic polymer block (b). When the molecular weight is small, there may be a case where mechanical properties enough as an elastomer cannot be expressed, and adversely when the molecular weight is large more than necessity, there may be a case where processing property is lowered. Since flowage under non pressurization is required in particular in case of the powder ~~slash~~slush molding, when the molecular weight is large, melt viscosity is enhanced and moldability tends to be deteriorated.

On pages 13-14, lines 26-27 and 1-11, please amend in the following manner:

When the functional group (X) is introduced into the methacrylic polymer block (a), it is preferable to be introduced within a range in which the moldability of the acrylic block copolymer (A) is not lowered. Since flowage under no pressurization is required particularly in case of the powder ~~slash~~slush molding, the cohesive force and the glass transition temperature T_g of the methacrylic polymer block (a) are increased by the

introduction of the functional group (X); therefore, melt viscosity is increased and moldability tends to be deteriorated. Specifically, it is preferable to be introduced within a range in which the glass transition temperature T_g of the methacrylic polymer block (a) after introduction of the functional group (X) is preferably at most 130°C , more preferably at most 110°C , and further preferably at most 100°C .

On page 55, lines 19-27, please amend in the following manner:

In the case of the powder ~~slask~~slush molding, it is preferable to obtain the thermoplastic elastomer composition as powder. As the process of obtaining powder, the powder can be obtained by finely pulverizing the thermoplastic elastomer composition in a block state or a pellet state which is processed by the above-mentioned process by using an impact pulverizer such as a turbo mill, a pin mill, a hammer mill and a centrifugation mill. At this time, pulverization is usually carried out at normal temperature, but mechanical pulverization can be carried out by using a cooling medium and a cooling facility.

On page 56, lines 2-26, please amend in the following manner:

The composition obtained in the above-described preparation process of the thermoplastic elastomer can be molded by various processes, and it can be preferably applied to powder ~~slask~~slush molding, injection molding, injection blow molding, blow molding, extrusion blow molding, extrusion molding, calendar molding, vacuum molding, and press molding. Among them, the powder ~~slask~~slush molding is more preferably used. Herein, the powder ~~slask~~slush molding is a process of flowing the composition powder into a molding mold heated at a high temperature to be melt-molded and taking

out a molded article solidified by cooling after taking a definite period of time. It is required to fluidize the powder to carry out melt-molding even under no pressurization in the powder ~~slush~~slush molding, but on the other hand, the molded article after molding is exposed in environments where the molded article is used at 100°C or more. Therefore, it is difficult to make a balance between moldability and heat resistance. However, since the acrylic block copolymer (A) and the compound (B) in the thermoplastic elastomer composition of the present invention are in an unreacted state before molding, and are excellent in melting property in a mold. On the other hand, the acrylic block copolymer (A) is reacted with the compound (B) within a definite period of time until it is solidified by cooling, the acrylic block copolymer (A) is converted to having a high molecular weight or crosslinked, and heat resistance after the molding is improved. Consequently, the thermoplastic elastomer composition can be recognized as a preferable material for the powder ~~slush~~slush molding.

On pages 56-57, lines 27 and 1-7, please amend in the following manner:

When heat resistance is imparted by the high molecular weight conversion of the acrylic block copolymer (A) at molding in the powder ~~slush~~slush molding, the number average molecular weight of the acrylic block copolymer (A) after molding is preferably 100,000 or more, more preferably 150,000 or more and further preferably 200,000 or more. When the number average molecular weight is lower than 100,000, the improvement effect of the heat resistance tends to be lowered.

On page 73, lines 4-15, please amend in the following manner:

The obtained sample was molded at a set temperature of 200°C for 5 minutes with a hot press (a compression molding machine NSF-50 made by Shinto Metal Industries Ltd.) using a skin crepe metal plate and molded articles for evaluation having a thickness of 1mm on which the skin crepe pattern was transcribed were obtained. Ethanol resistance, oil resistance, urethane adhesivity and heat resistance test were measured for these molded articles. The result is shown in Table 1. Further, the powder ~~slush~~ property test was carried out for powder obtained by pulverizing the block sample obtained in the above description. Further, an insoluble content ratio (% by weight) was measured by using a powder before the powder ~~slush~~ molding and a sheet after molding. The result is shown in Table 1.

On page 75, lines 3-6, please amend in the following manner:

The obtained sample was evaluated in the same manner as Example 1. The result is shown in Table 1. It is clear that the block sample is excellent in powder ~~slush~~ moldability but inferior in heat resistance.

On page 75, lines 13-14, please amend in the following manner:

It is clear that the block sample is excellent in heat resistance but inferior in powder ~~slush~~ moldability.

On pages 76-77, lines 3-12 and line 1, please amend in the following manner:

As cleared from Table 1 (Examples 1 to 4 and Comparative Examples 1 and 2), it proves that the thermoplastic elastomer composition of the present invention is excellent in powder ~~slash~~slush moldability and, additionally, improves heat resistance of the obtained molded article by a crosslinking reaction (the increase of insoluble content ratio) compared with only a block copolymer. Further, it is clear that it is also excellent in ethanol resistance and oil resistance. Further, when the obtained sheet is used as a superficial skin material for an automobile, it is required to be adhered to polyurethane which are generally used as a substrate, and it is clear that the thermoplastic elastomer composition is favorably adhered.